

## **A minute with Farmer Fred**

FF: I know that these people enjoy their rogaining and many also enjoy their wine, but there is something I need to tell you. Your rogainers and my grape vines do not mix!

RR: Is that right – why do they say that?

FF: It is all to do with a nasty disease called phylloxera. There is an interesting history here – phylloxera was imported to Europe from America in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and wiped out 80% of French vines. Now, as a patriotic Australian wine drinker, you might not see that as a bad thing, but I can assure you that there are some people who believe that the French make some good wines. What is more, phylloxera spread through most of Europe and beyond.

RR: Do we have phylloxera today? Do you mean in Australia?

FF: Unfortunately we do, and some of the vineyards in the Strathbogie Ranges have it.

RR: How can we assist? What would you like us to do?

FF: It is very important that your rogainers do not walk through any vineyards. I know that you have made this a rule for your Victorian Rogaining Championships, but it is very important to us as grape growers. I thought that if your members knew the reason behind our concern then they might suddenly wake from their trance at 2am and stop before they proceed straight ahead through any vineyard.

RR: Absolutely. I see a win-win here. We will stay well outside your vines, and this will help you commercially of course. And then you can continue to make great wines and I will help to use them responsibly. We have marked known vineyards as out-of-bounds on our course map. We also have a rule that teams cannot walk through vineyards. We have just recently re-looked at our controls to remove any obvious pathways that would take teams through grapes; and now we have explained the reasons behind these actions.

FF: Thanks for all that. We really appreciate anything that will protect our vines. They are the basis of our livelihood.

RR: Why, no trouble at all. When it comes to you producing good wines, I am right behind you!